



illustration courtesy of Stories by Freepik

# WORKING FROM HOME EXPERIENCE & INSIGHTS

GENSLER STAFF EXPERIENCE IN ASIA-PACIFIC MIDDLE EAST (APME)

With Coronavirus pandemic spreading rapidly across the region, more and more cities in our region are in 'lock-down' with workplaces, schools and other social gathering points closed. As the world adjust to the 'New Normal', Gensler employees in the Asia Pacific Middle East (APME) region have also been working from home at scale since March 2020.

This survey was launched as a pulse check on how the APME region is adjusting to working from home and to assess the impact of the 'New Normal' on working experience and effectiveness across the range of cultures, demographics and roles.

During the time of the survey, most of the region (62%) had been working from home for over 2 weeks.

April 20, 2020

**Gensler**

# RESPONDENT PROFILE

78%

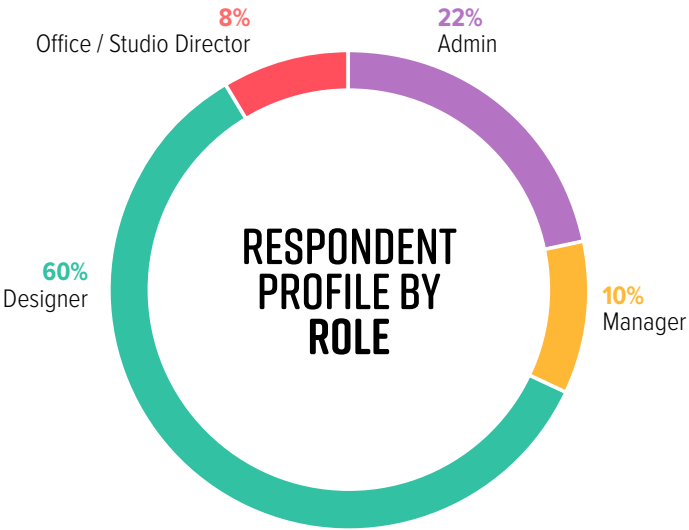
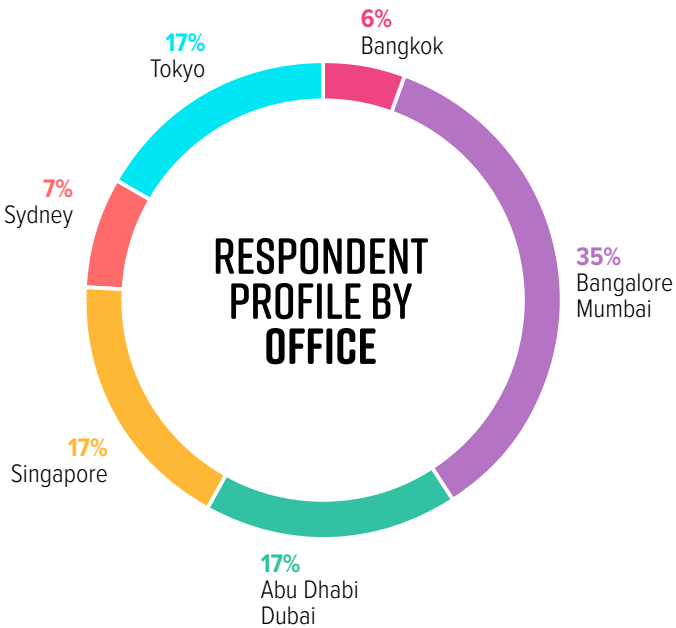
response rate across the region, this survey represents sentiments from our staff across our Sydney, Singapore, Tokyo, Bangalore, Mumbai, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Bangkok offices.

Responses by role is largely (60%) from Designers.

50% respondents are from Wokplace studios with Lifestyle studios at 29% and 21% from Admin studios

The survey response period was 1<sup>st</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> April.

Office	Response Rate
India (Bangalore & Mumbai)	85%
Bangkok	100%
Sydney	81%
Middle East (Dubai & Abu Dhabi)	91%
Tokyo	43%
Singapore	93%



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## APME 68% SATISFIED

68% are satisfied (or very satisfied) with WFH with Sydney the highest (91%). Those in Admin roles have the highest WFH satisfaction score (84% satisfied). Office & Studio Directors rated their WFH most poorly (52% satisfied).

## A CULTURE OF TRUST

Almost everyone (96%) feels that their manager trusts them to get their work done and know who to reach out to with questions. Most (94%) know what is expected of them.

## THE TOP THREE THINGS WE MISSED

Socializing with colleagues (64%), Impromptu face-to-face meetings (57%) and access to ergonomic set-up for work (51%). For Office & Studio Directors, scheduled, in-person meetings with Clients/ Consultants are also missed (67%).

## MORE EMPOWERED, MORE PRODUCTIVE

64% of our staff feel more productive; 67% feel more empowered and 55% feel more engaged when WFH.

## IMPACT ON LIFESTYLE

Although minimal impact is reported to diet, sleep and exercise patterns, staff feel that WFH has a positive impact on personal or family relationships. 50% of staff said they do feel stressed; Design managers are the most stressed group.

## WE'RE SPENDING LESS TIME LEARNING

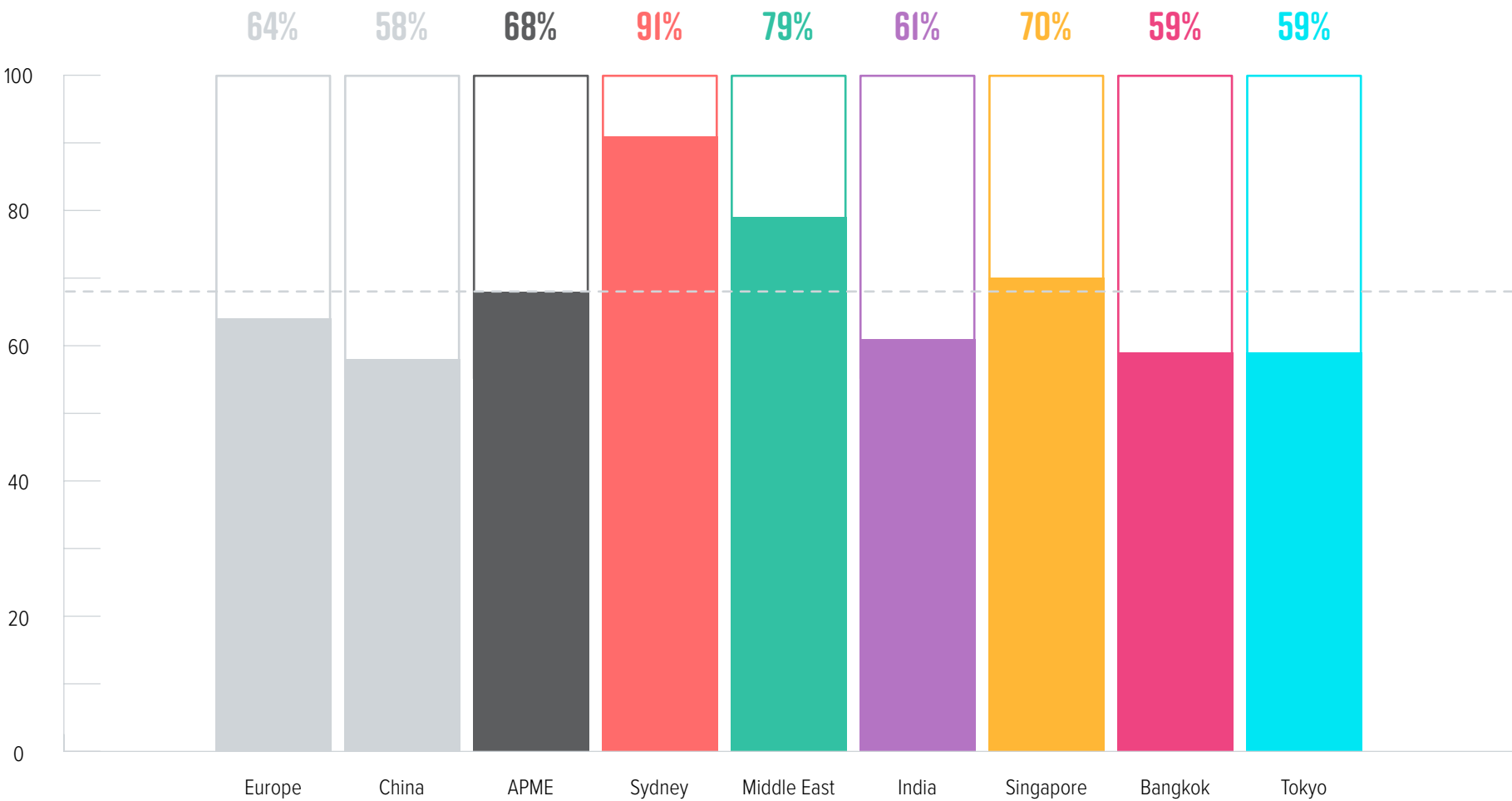
In addition to higher levels of virtual collaboration and significantly lower levels of socializing with colleagues, scores for learning and personal development were low compared to working in the office.



01

# OVERALL THERE IS HIGH SATISFACTION WITH WORKING FROM HOME

“ I can utilise my working hours flexibly without disrupting the quality and efficiency of work



68%

were satisfied or very satisfied with working from home with Sydney reporting the highest satisfaction rates and Tokyo the lowest.

Those with more dependents (small children or parents) at home or those living alone reported the lowest satisfaction scores.

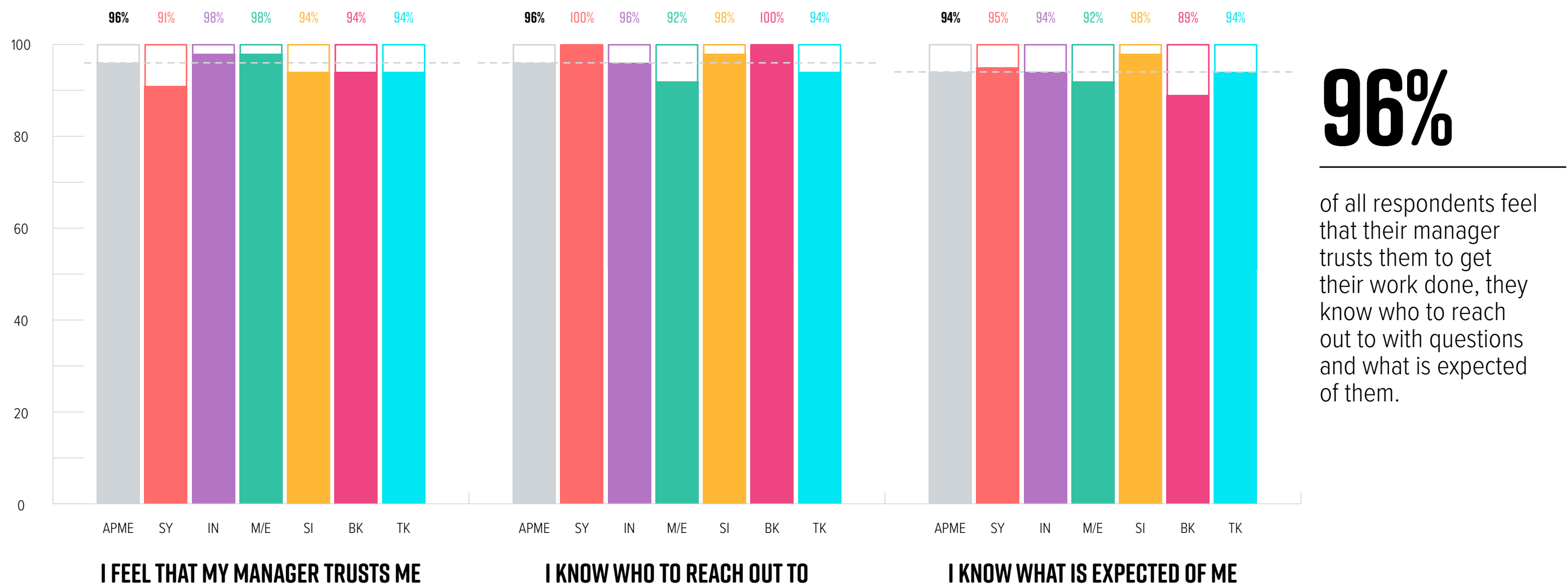
Admin staff were the most satisfied; Office & Studio Directors were the least satisfied.

The number of satisfied staff in APME is higher than Gensler Eurpore and Gensler China offices.

# 02

## WE HAVE A CULTURE OF TRUST ACROSS APME

“” The flexibility (and) freedom in doing my work... and level of confidence in completing my work

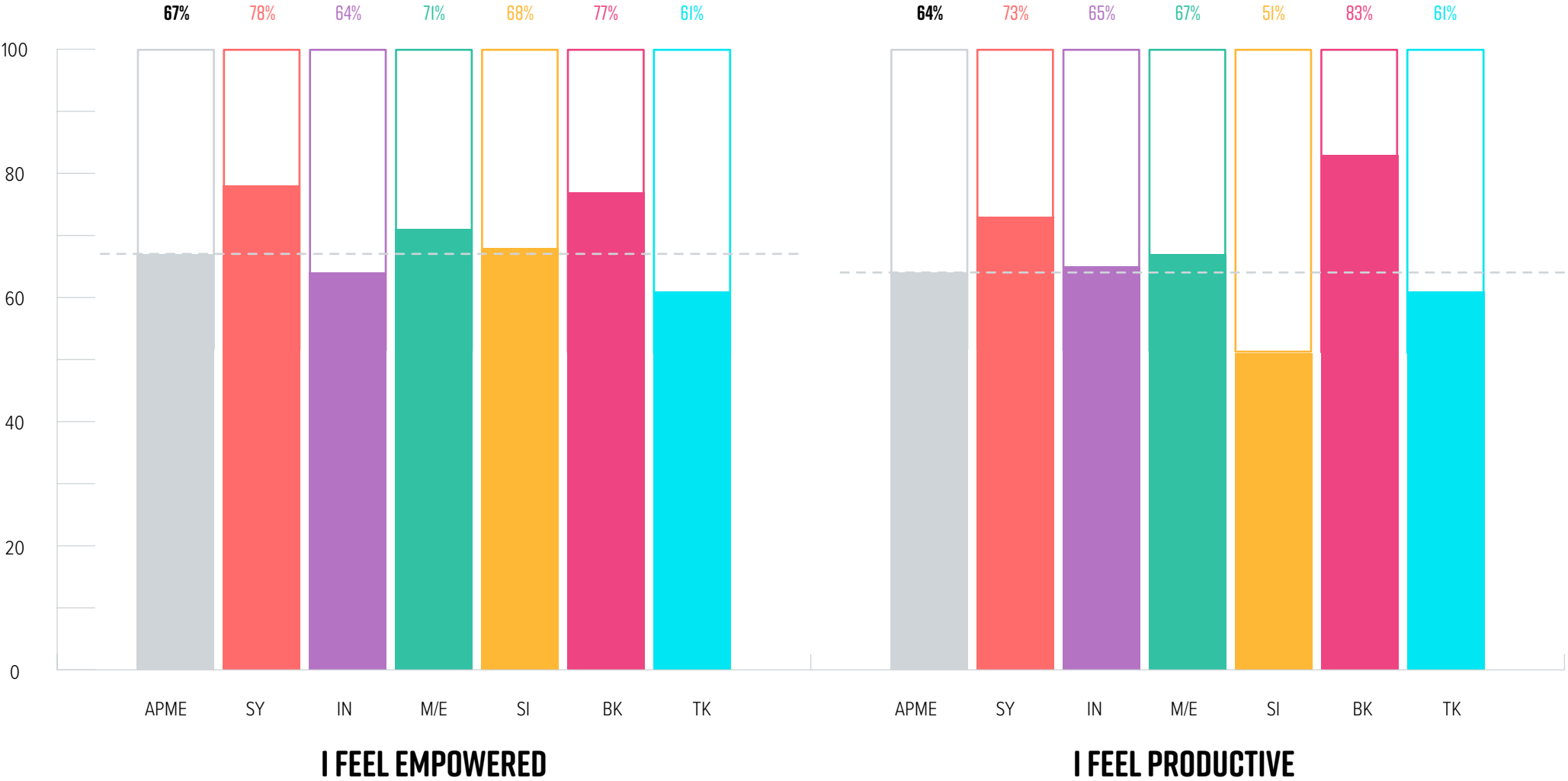


03

# OVERALL WE FEEL MORE EMPOWERED AND MORE PRODUCTIVE WFH

“ ” I feel you can “mute” all communications for a period to do your work at home and be more productive.

...Not missing gym session, because i can make up the extra time to finish tasks in my own



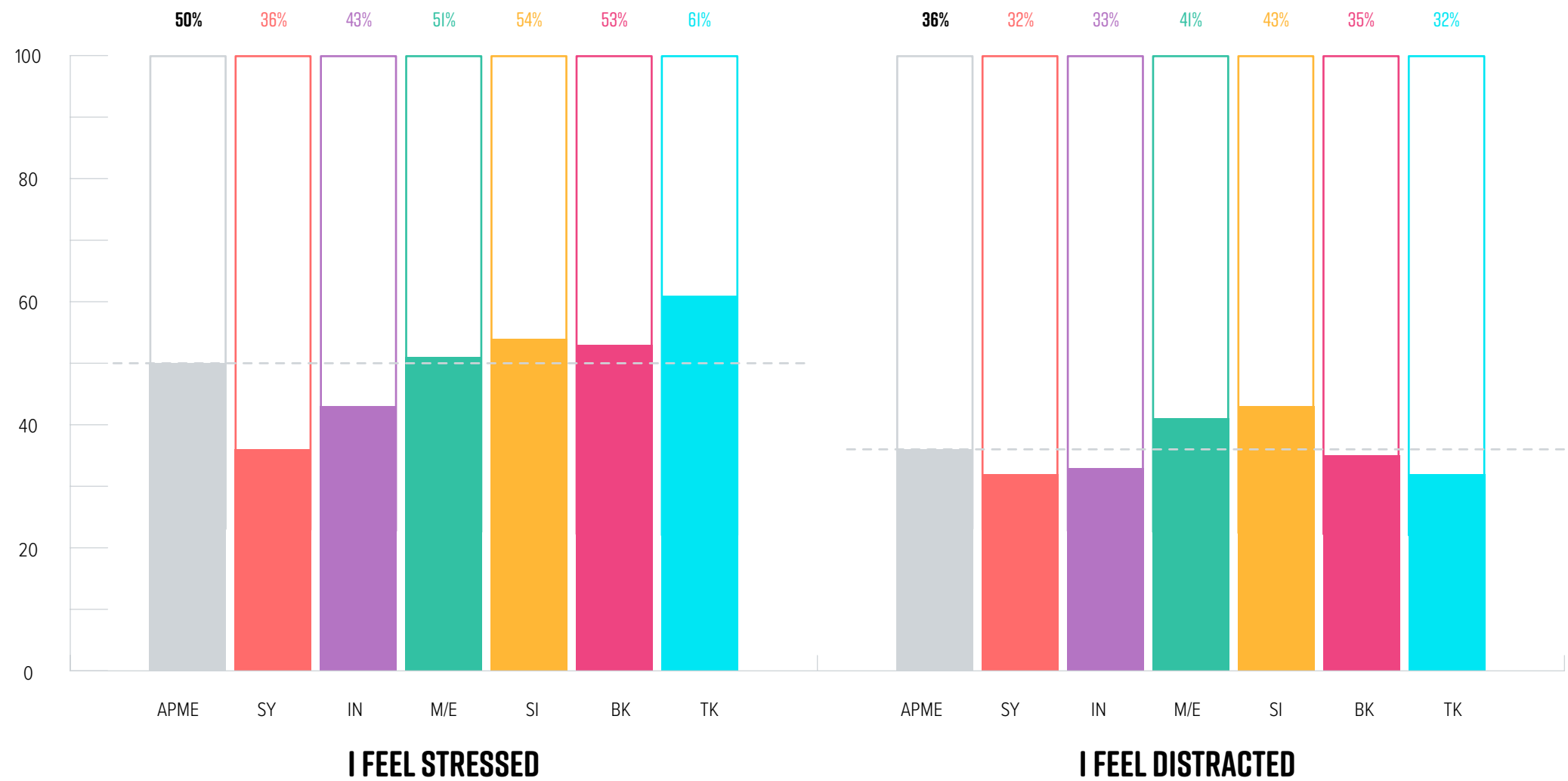
67%

of our staff feel more empowered when WFH; 64% feel more productive when WFH; 55% feel more engaged when WFH compared to working at the office.

This trend was generally similar across all households types except those living with siblings/ relatives feel more distracted but less stressed.

# 04 MANAGEMENT ROLES REPORTED HIGHER STRESS LEVELS THAN THE REST

“ Not being able to meet my team face-to-face and be updated with how everyone’s doing - whether that’s in their lives or in their projects.



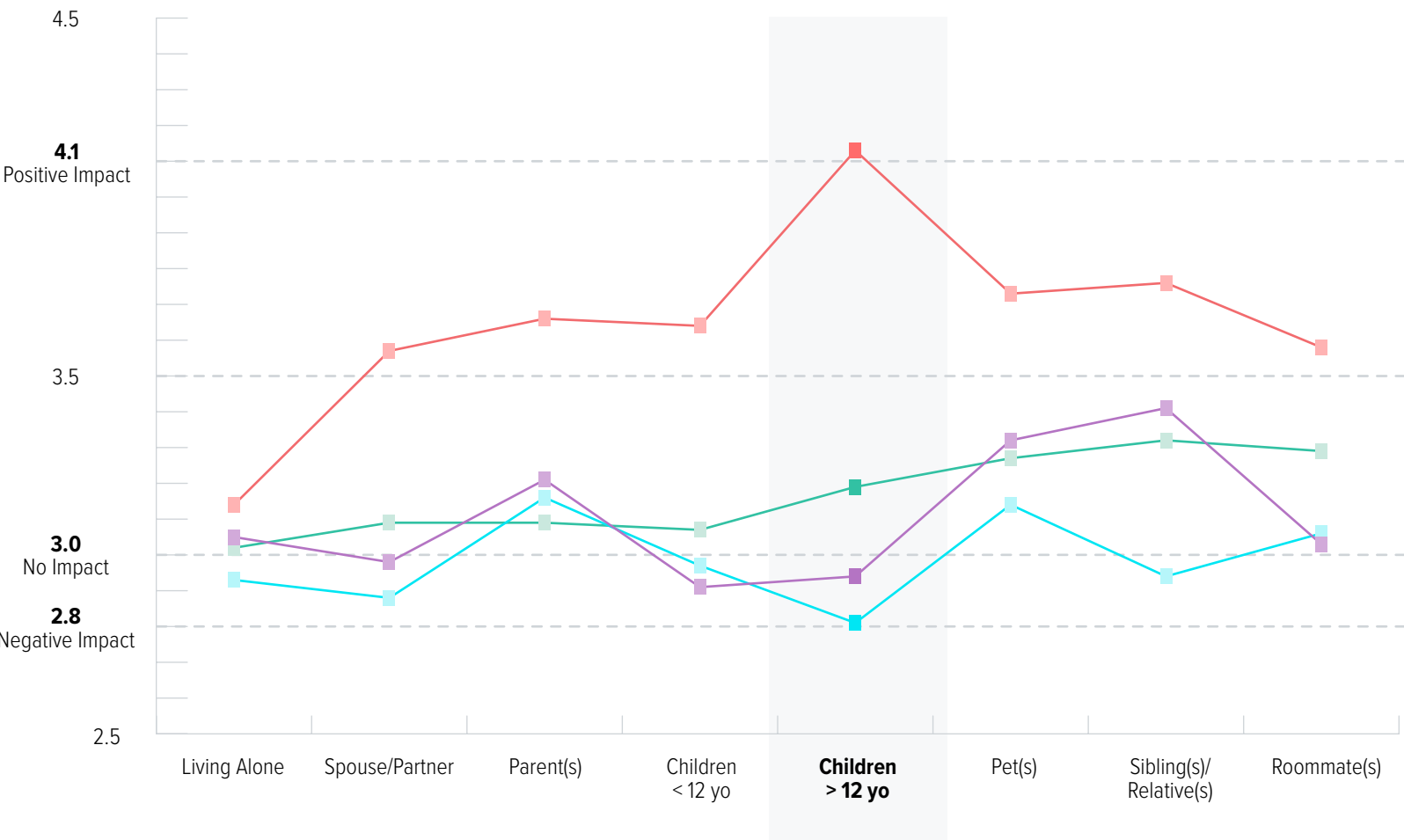
50%

of our staff reported feeling stressed; 36% feel distracted when WFH.

Those in management roles (Studio / Office Directors and Design Managers) reported higher stress levels than the rest due to project disruptions and uncertainties as well as less contact with clients with on-going business disruption due to the pandemic.

PERSONAL / FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS WERE POSITIVELY IMPACTED

“ I get to see my children more throughout the day; ability to exercise (albeit indoors) are greater freedom on time.



Personal/Family Relationships



Sleep Schedule



Exercise



Diet

50%

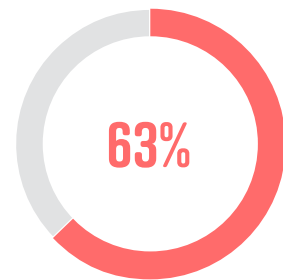
of staff said that WFH has a positive impact on personal or family relationships and this also has the strongest association with satisfaction scores.

This is especially evident for households with children over 12 yrs old. More time at home probably allows these respondents to have more opportunities to connect and engage with their teenage / adult children who are studying or WFH.

However, WFH has minimal reported impact to diet, sleep and exercise patterns.

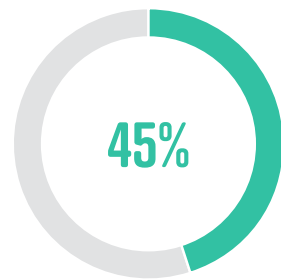


## HIGHEST WORKLIFE BALANCE SCORES VARIED BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE IN EACH COUNTRY



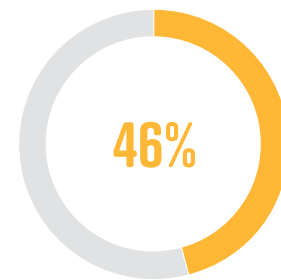
**respondents in Sydney agree they have better Work/Life Balance by WFH.**

The highest worklife balance scores in Sydney were from people living with their spouse/partner



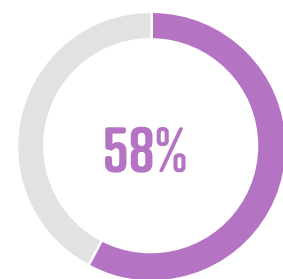
**respondents in M/E agree they have better Work/Life Balance by WFH**

The highest worklife balance scores in M/E were from people currently living on their own



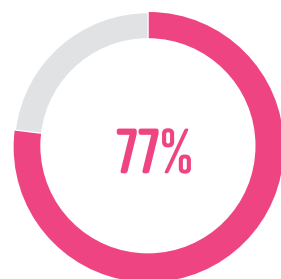
**respondents in Singapore agree they have better Work/Life Balance by WFH.**

The highest worklife balance scores in Singapore were from people living with spouse/partners & children of 12 years or younger



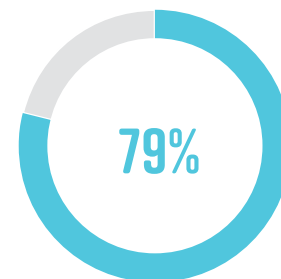
**respondents in India agree they have better Work/Life Balance by WFH**

The highest worklife balance scores in India were from people living with spouse/partner



**respondents in Bangkok agree they have better Work/Life Balance by WFH**

The highest worklife balance scores in Bangkok were from people living with their parents



**respondents in Tokyo agree they have better Work/Life Balance by WFH**

The highest worklife balance scores in Tokyo were from people living with spouse/partner & children of 12 years or younger.

**“”** I have extra time in the morning and the evening to get organised and spend time for myself, which gives a more positive and productive attitude to work

# 58%

of staff said that WFH has enabled a better Work Life Balance and there is a strong association between WFH satisfaction scores and work life balance. Those in Admin roles had the highest scores for Work Life Balance.

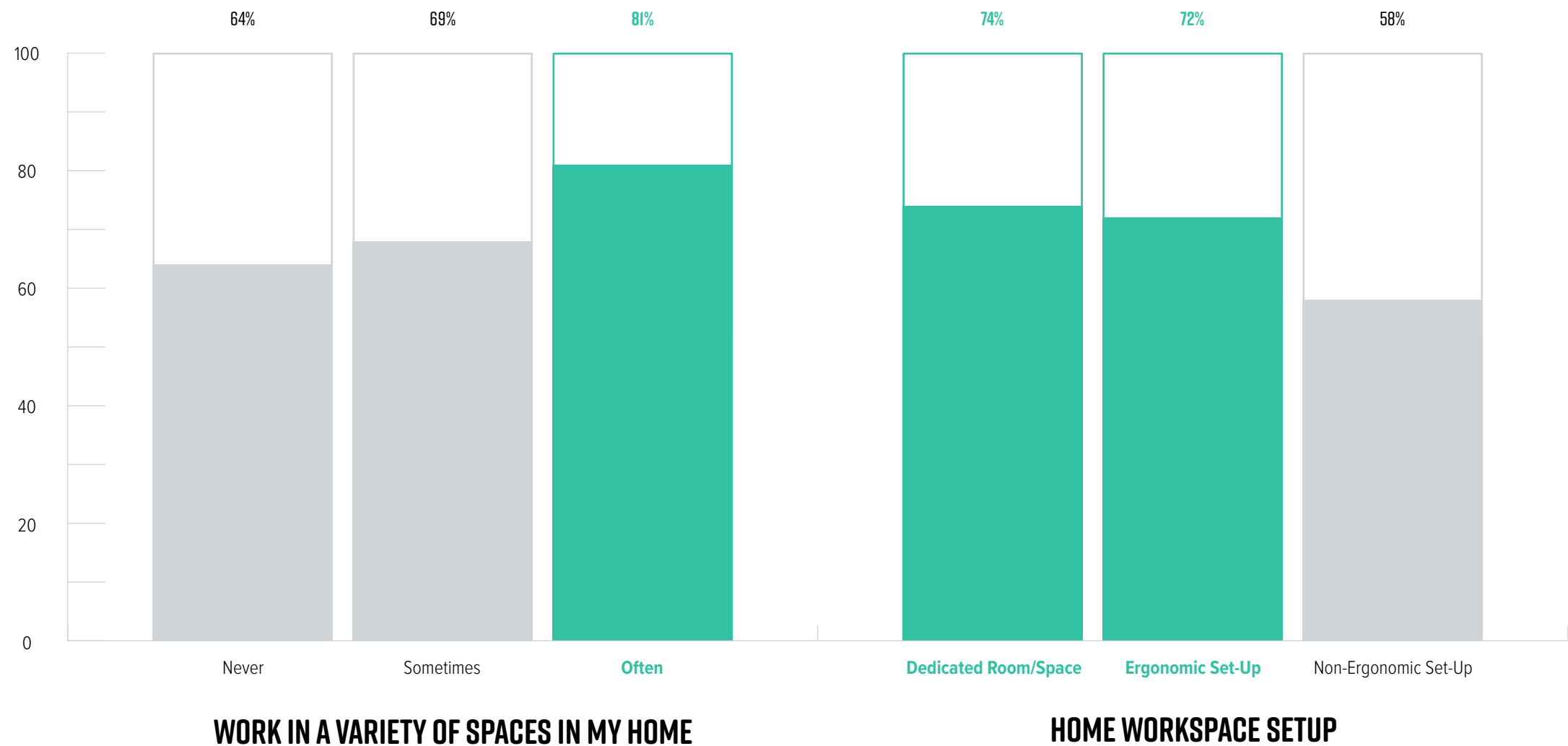
However, work life balance scores vary by household type in each country reflecting the cultural norms within country.

In addition, the top three things that staff like most about WFH are the lack of commute, flexibility and time for family / friendships - all contributors to better work like balance.

07

THOSE IN ERGONOMIC SETTINGS; THOSE MOBILE  
THROUGH THE DAY WERE MOST SATISFIED

“ I move around, from sofa, to bedroom, to bar counter, to table. This helps with ergonomics in continuous movement, which I didn’t get in the office



58%

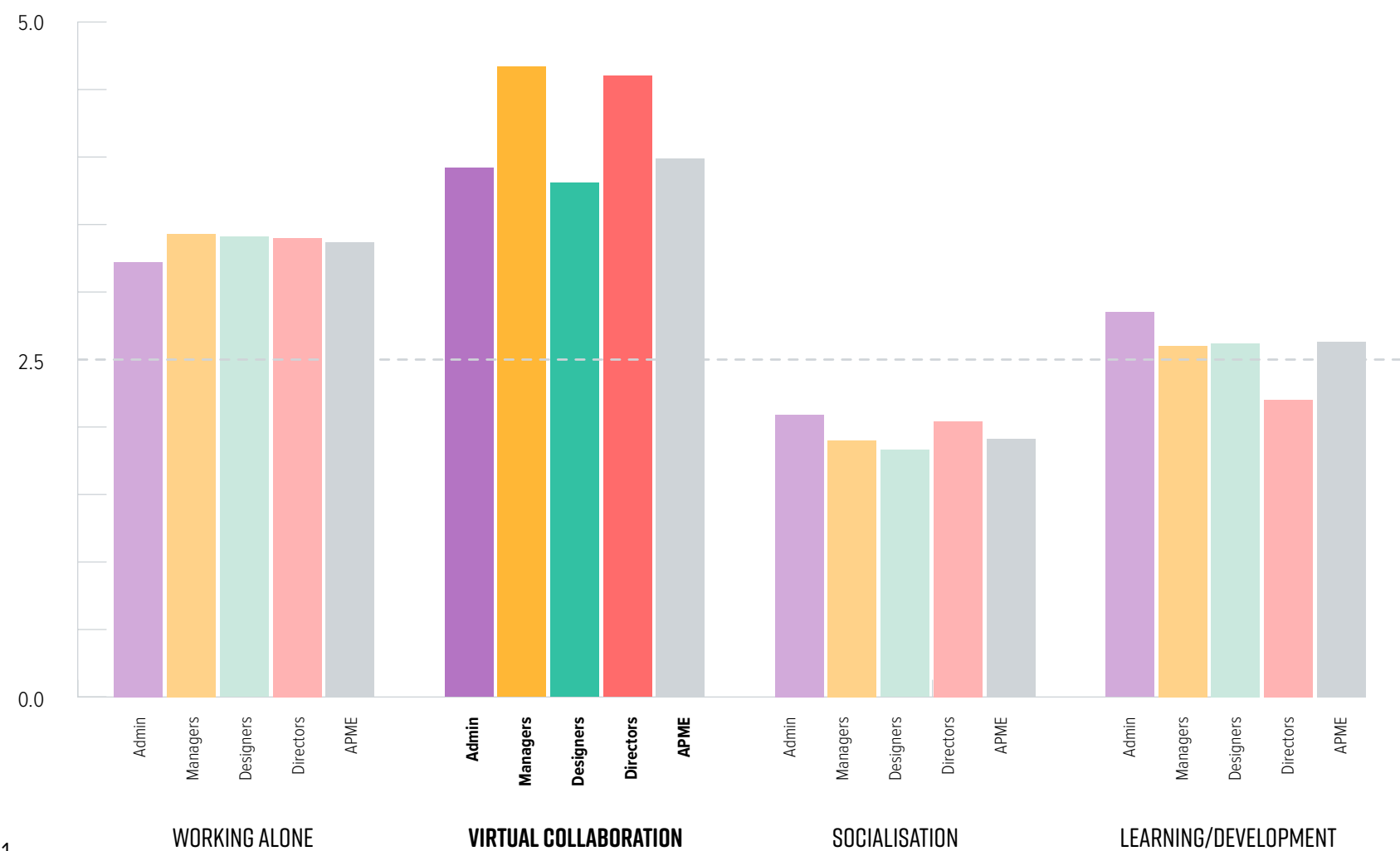
Those with an ergonomic setup / functional space for work reported 14-16% higher WFH satisfaction scores.

However, we also found that those who said that they worked in a variety of spaces in their home throughout the day were more satisfied.

08

# STAFF SPEND LESS TIME LEARNING & SOCIALISING, MORE TIME ON VIRTUAL COLLABORATION

“ I miss spontaneous laughter / interactions with colleagues in the office



34% SPEND LESS TIME LEARNING

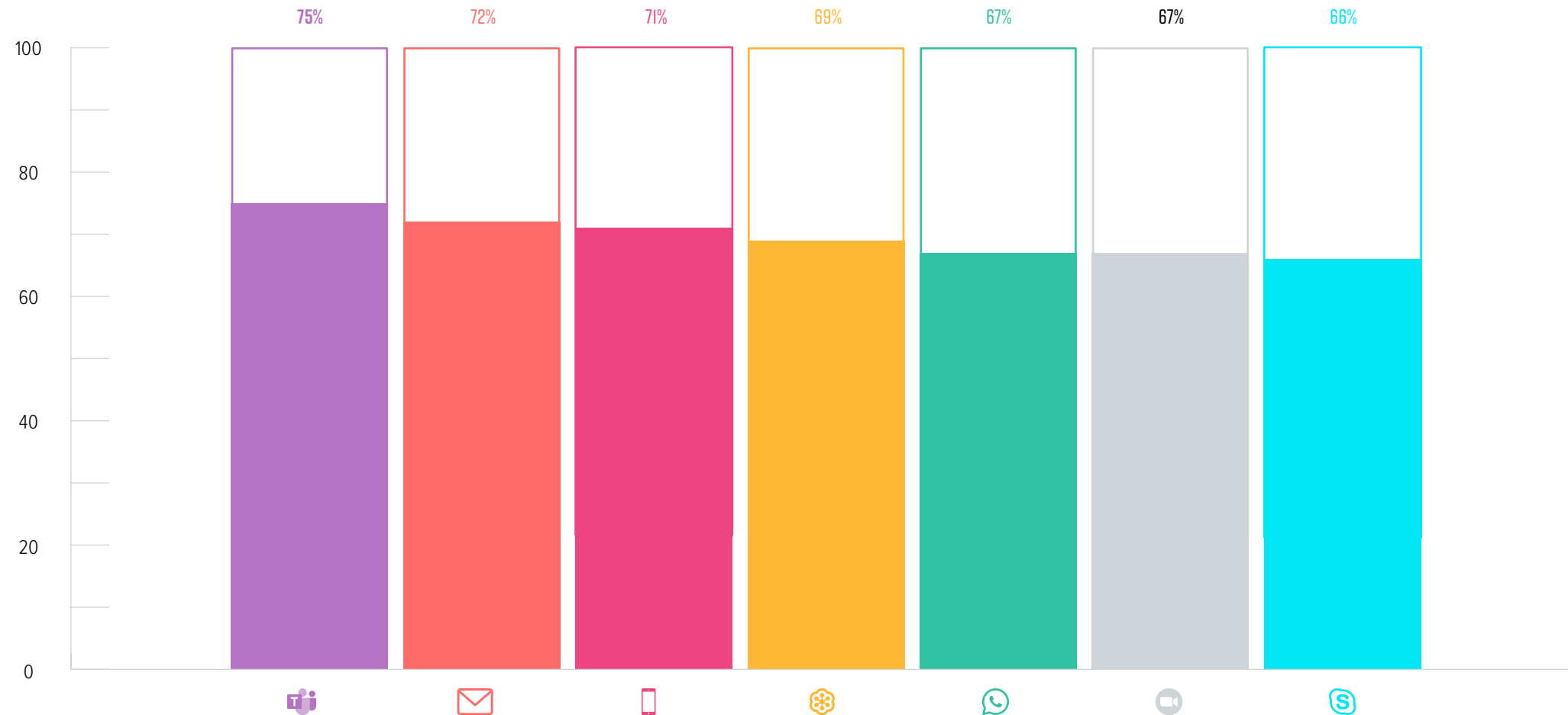
As expected, the responses on how staff spend their time across the different work modes show significantly higher levels of virtual collaboration and significantly lower levels of socializing with colleagues.

However, scores for learning and personal development were also low compared to working in the office, especially for Office Directors & Studio Leaders.

The work mode pattern was similar across offices as APME overall although there is slightly more socialization reported in BKK and Middle East compared to other offices and less virtual collaboration reported in Bangkok and Bangalore compared to Singapore and Sydney.

09

## MS TEAMS WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOL, BUT NOT BY MUCH



“” Ability to connect to anyone in the firm without having to worry about it being missed

# 75%

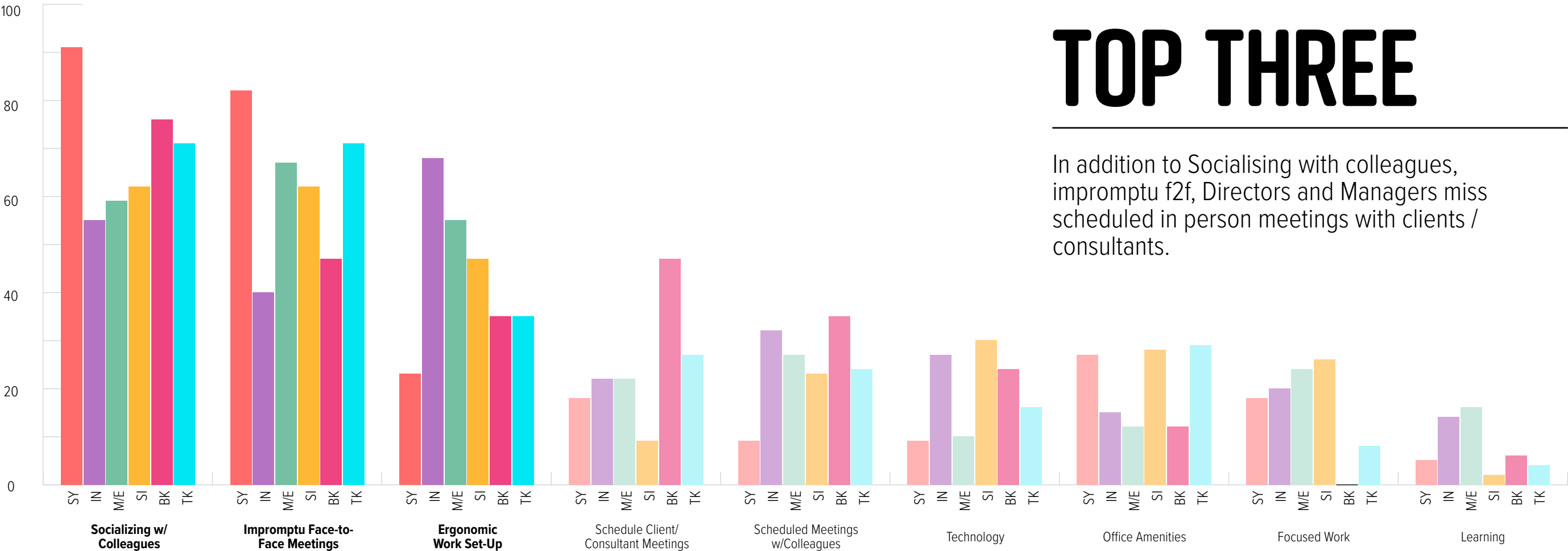
was the overall effectiveness score for MS Teams which was reported as the most effective communication tool. Emails & phone calls were next at >70%.

There is a nuance across countries. Sydney finds WebEx & Zoom most effective and Bangkok finds goto meetings most effective.

Design managers find WhatsApp more effective than the rest of staff.

# WE MISS SOCIALIZING, IMPROMPTU F2F MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO AN ERGONOMIC SET-UP

“” If you dont have good work space & technology support at home then it takes away your focus level from work.



# WHAT WE LIKE MOST ABOUT WFH

No Commuting

Flexibility

Time for Family/Friendships

Ability to Concentrate

Time for Personal Activities

Conducive/Comfortable Envriion.

Productivity

Better Meals

Work/Life Balance

Not Having to Dress Up

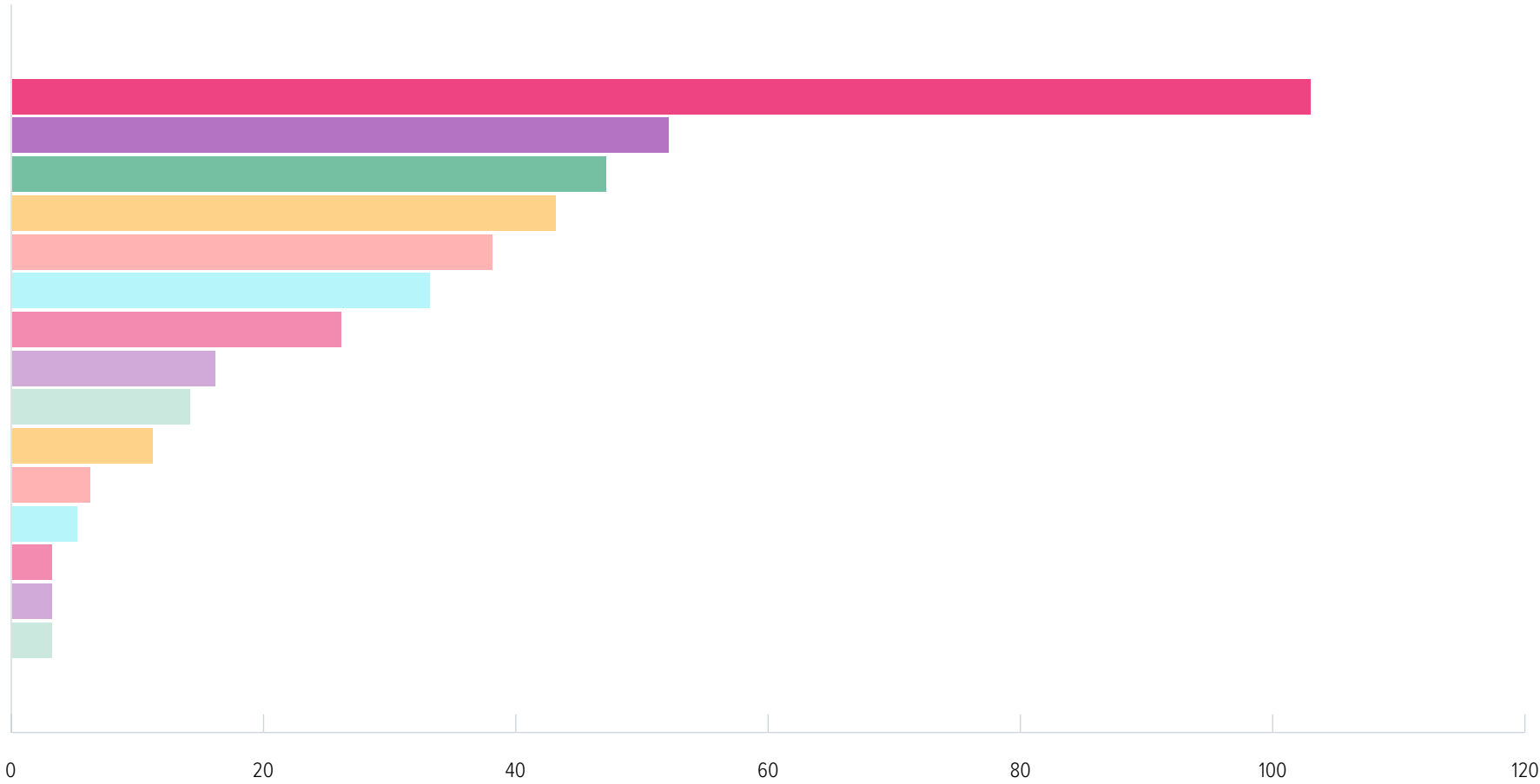
Having a Routine

Access to Personal Items

Virus Isolation

Support from Company/Colleagues

More Communication



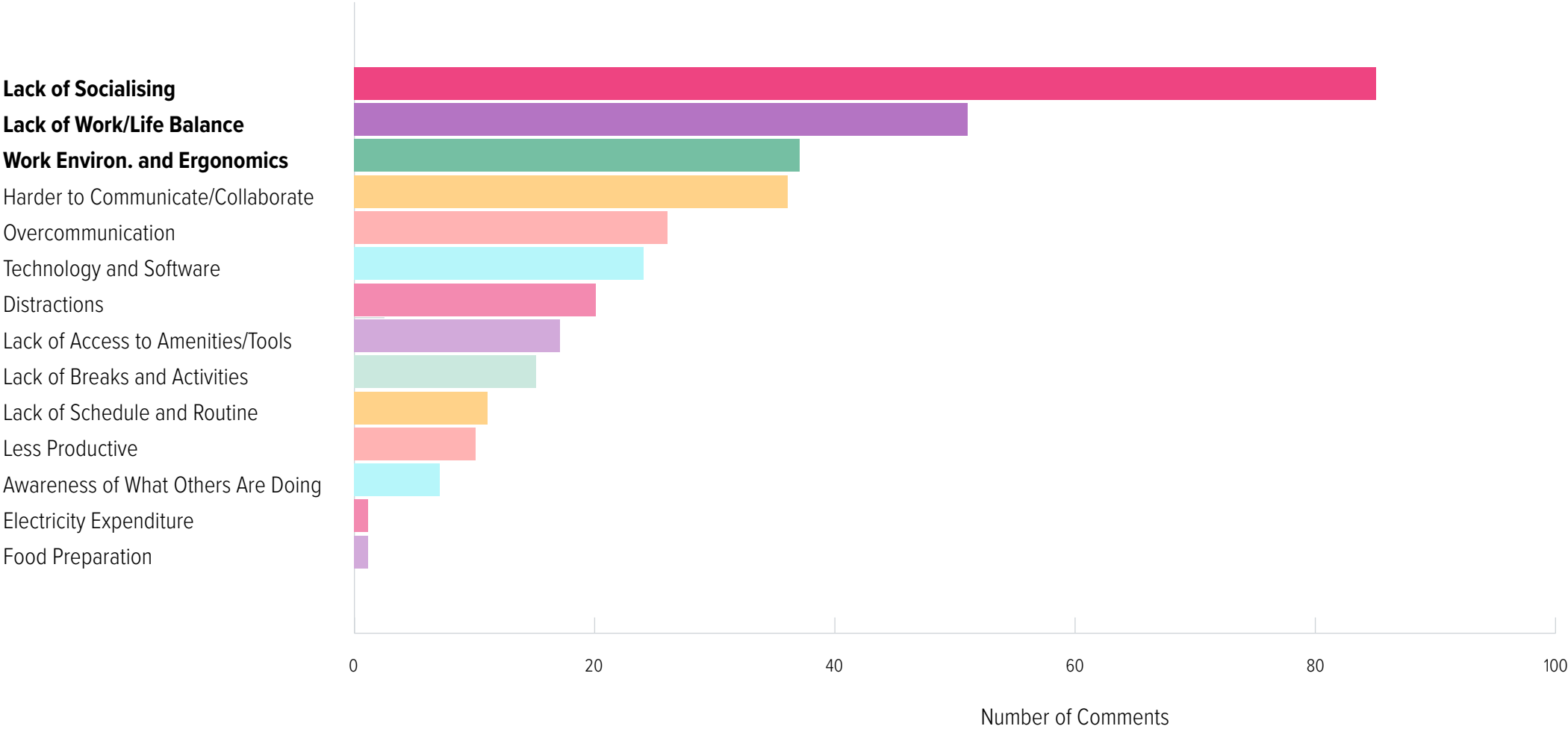
“ ”

**No (More) Commuting**  
Avoiding the insane traffic commuting to work and using the travel time more productively for work or for rest / home chores.

**Empowered with Flexibility**  
...I am able to properly take small breaks whenever I need to without feeling stressed out about it.

**Time Together**  
I can see my family and kids. Support them if required.

# WHAT WE DISLIKE MOST ABOUT WFH



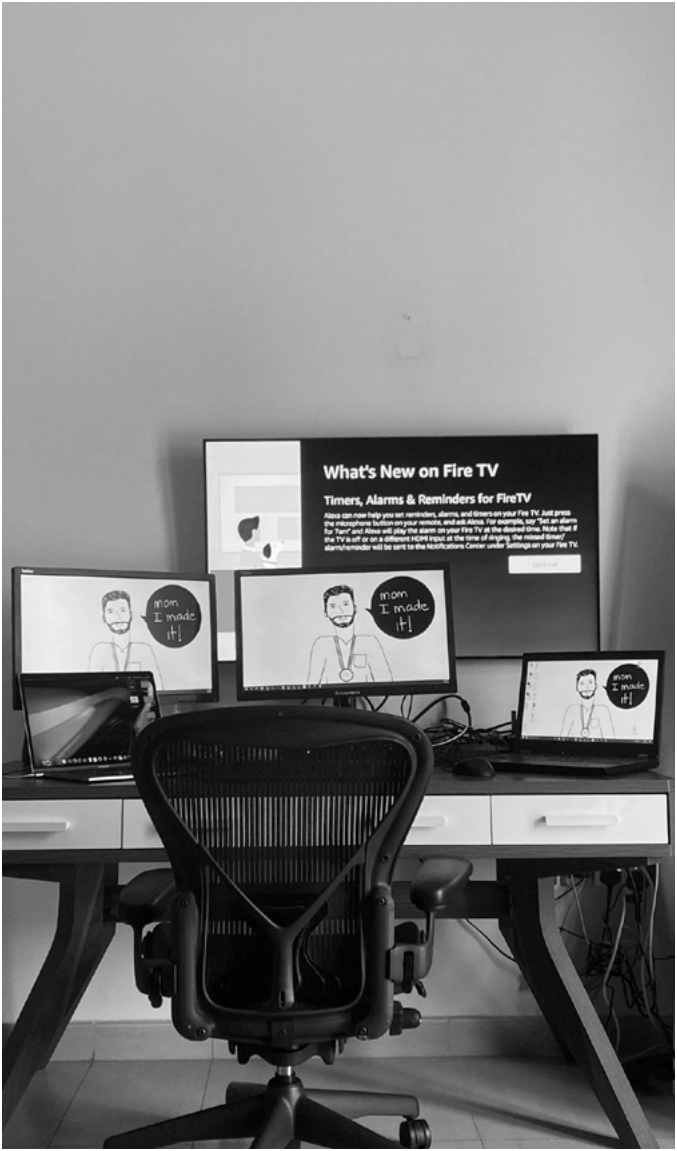
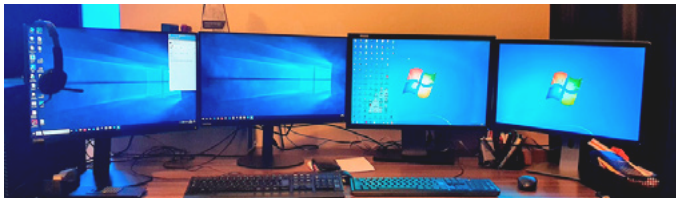
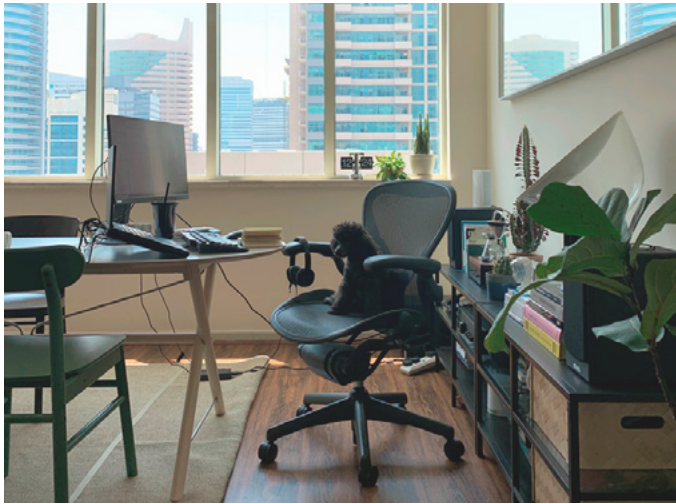
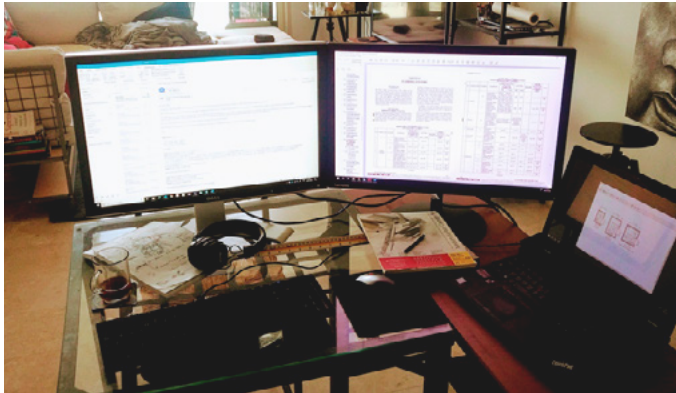
“ ”

**Where Did the People Go?**  
The human contact is missing which I believe leads to lesser professional development.

**Blurred Timeline**  
Blurring of work-life, working longer hours now that we are all ‘available’.  
  
Working on all the weekends. Proper work life balance should be encouraged.



# WORKING FROM HOME IN THE MIDDLE EAST



“ ”

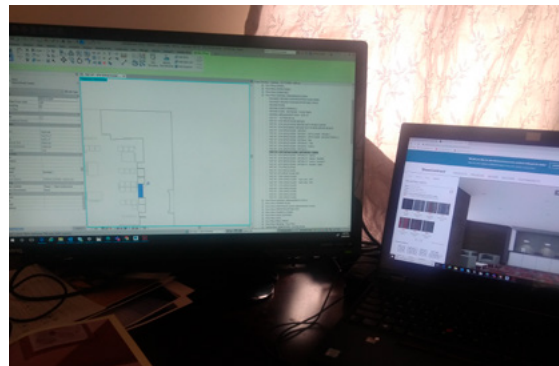
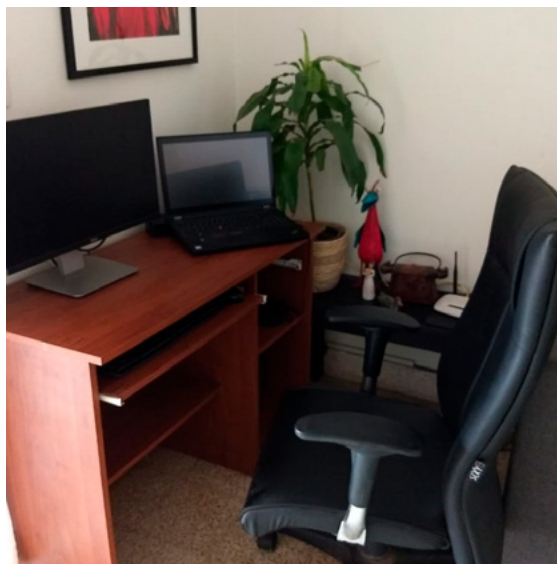
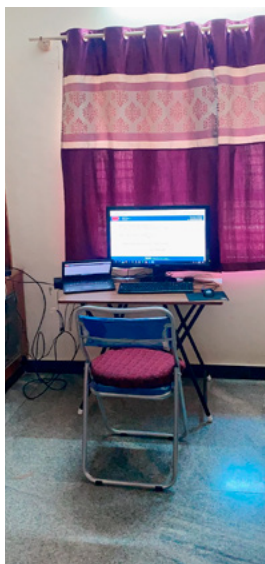
I have set up my dining table as my work place, happy with my set up, I have long table

I move around, from sofa, to bedroom, to bar counter, to table. This helps with ergonomics in continuous movement, which I didnt get in the office

My bedroom is my dedicated room.



# WORKING FROM HOME IN INDIA



“ ”

Work on small computer table with a plastic chair.

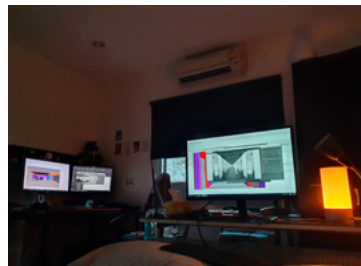
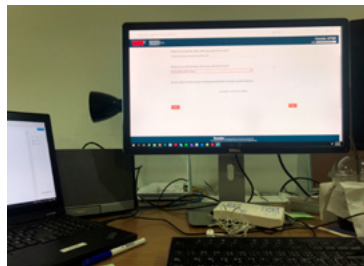
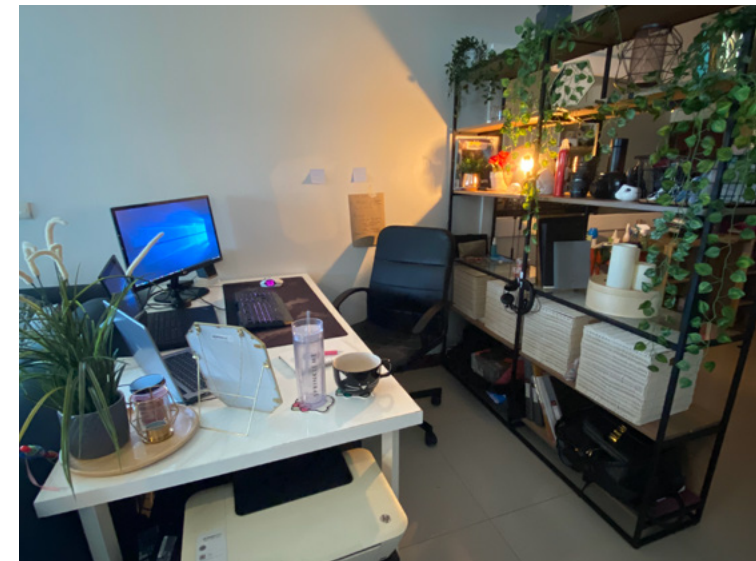
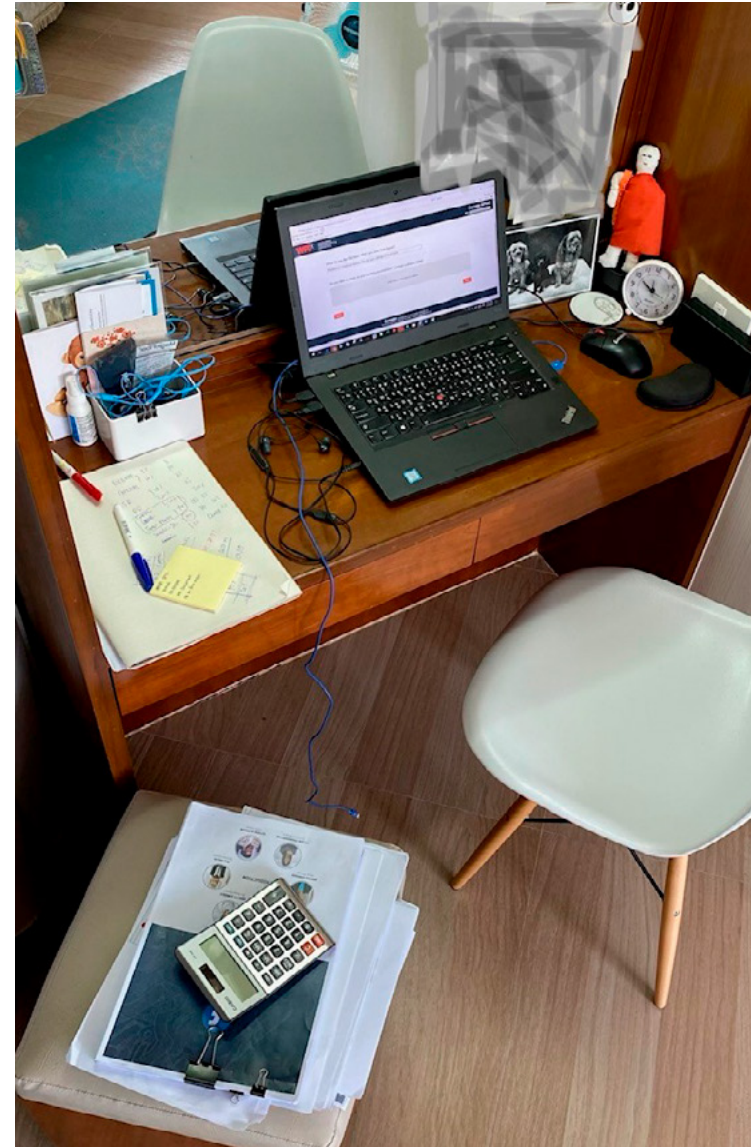
Table was never meant to take that load of monitor dock laptop etc. Chair is not a task chair to can't sit long for work at once.

It is not ergonomic but will work for short term adjustment.

**Gensler**



# WORKING FROM HOME **IN BANGKOK**



“ ”

I did not have a work area at home and with a small child, I have to buy a set of work furniture to set up in a separate room.

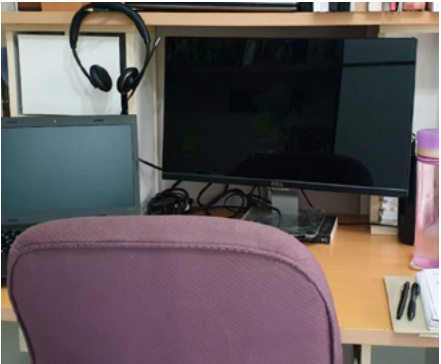
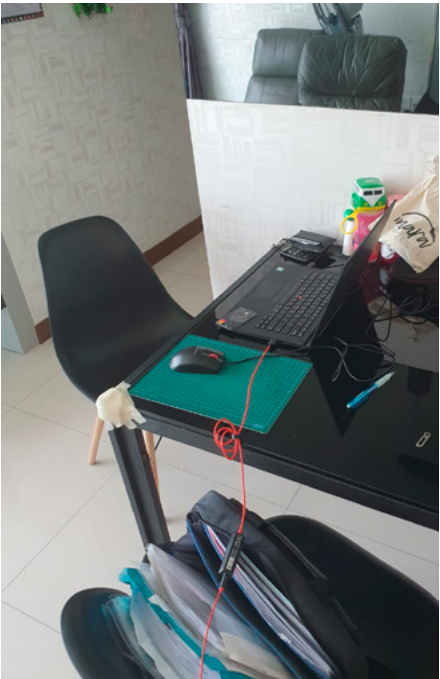
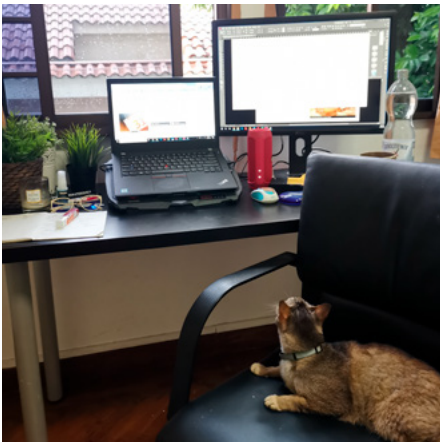
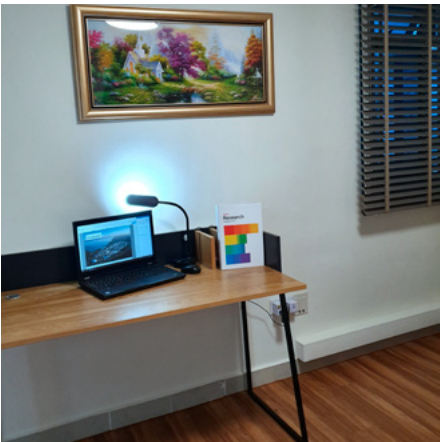
Working in my bedroom - make up desk.

bad workspace as my apartment is relatively small

I would like the the least hot weather make me open air conditional all day



# WORKING FROM HOME IN SINGAPORE



“ ”

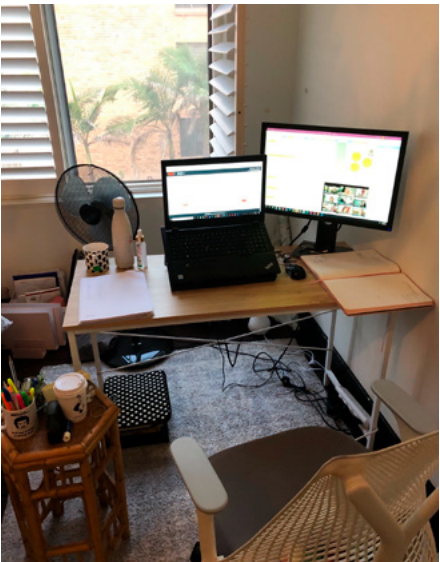
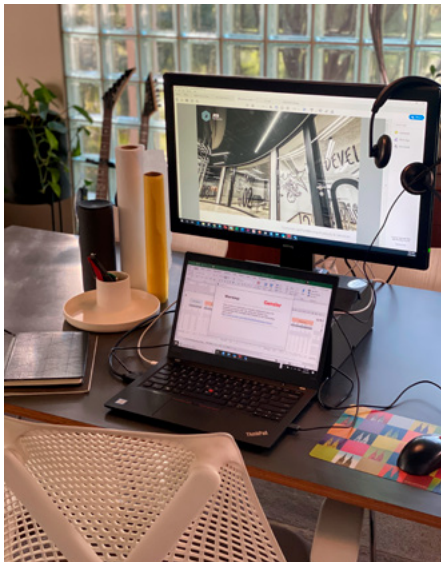
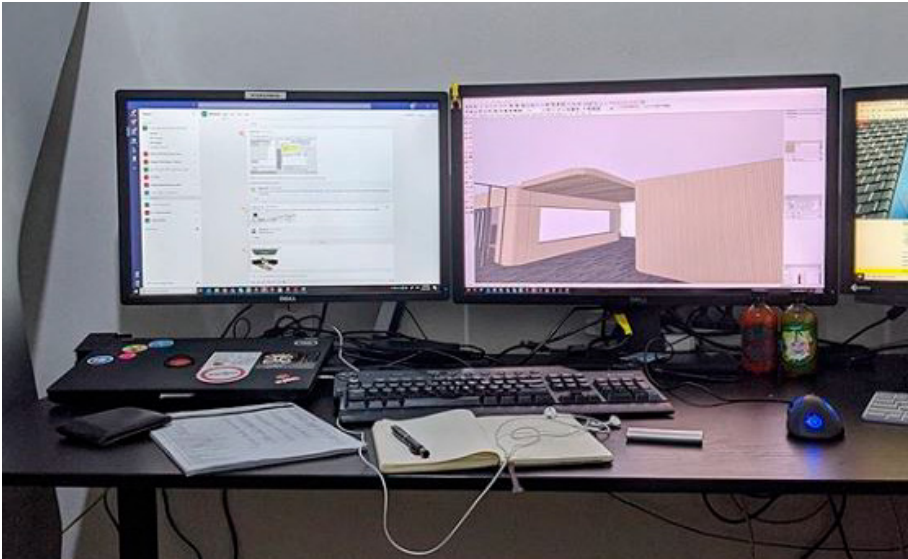
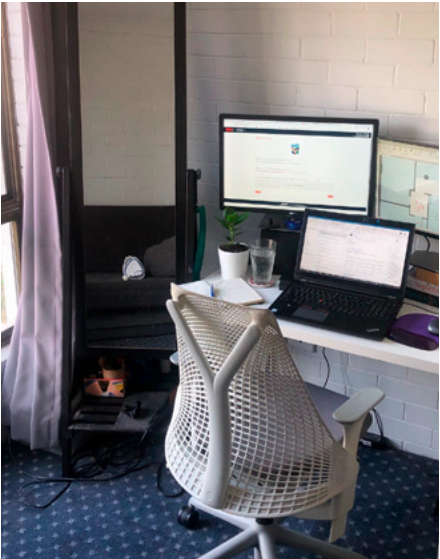
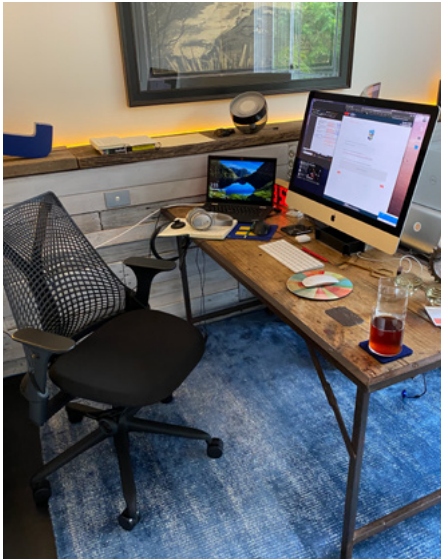
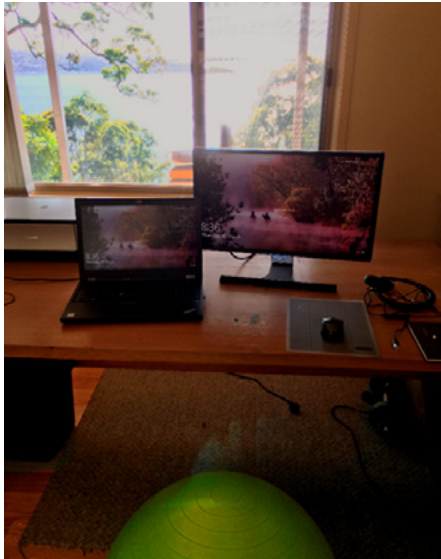
... freedom in doing my work (w/loud music/singing along to the music w/out bothering anyone) ...

... not hunting for a non-bookable phone booth prior to scheduled calls, or during a call.

The quietness.



# WORKING FROM HOME IN SYDNEY



“ ”

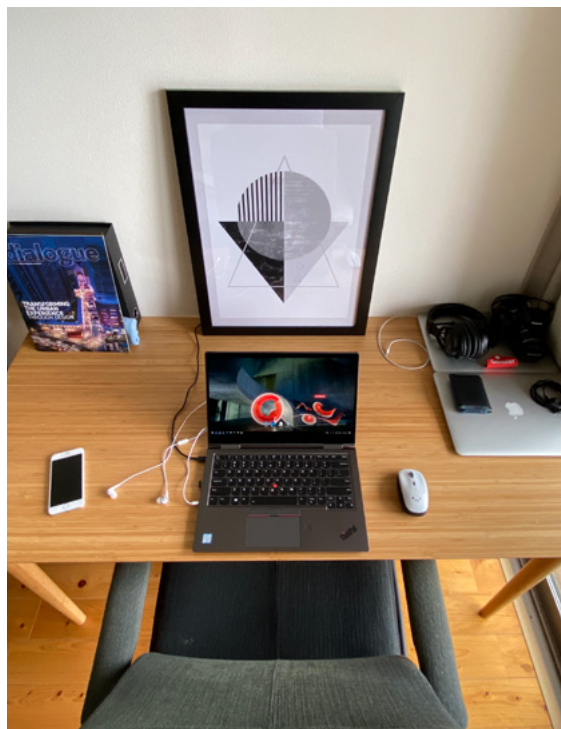
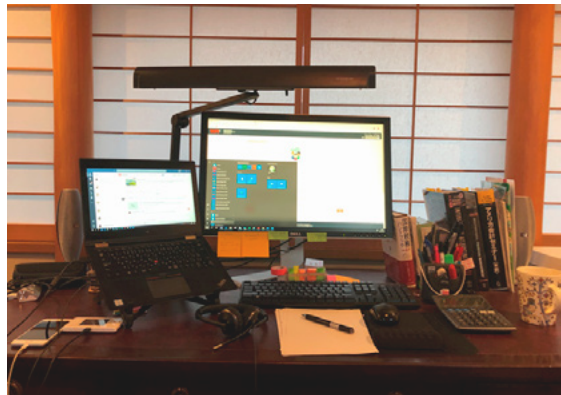
In second bedroom with yoga ball

Working alongside my partner, access to fresh air, opportunity to concentrate

My apartment is very small - a little challenging with ergonomics



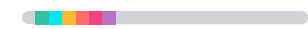
# WORKING FROM HOME **IN TOKYO**



“ ”

My dining table is too high and my shoulders have been aching for the past 2 weeks.

2 PCs on one desk, using personal one as 2nd monitor, iPhone on cradle, actually this is much more efficient desktop config. than being in the office.



# THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?



illustration courtesy of Stories by Freepik

**Gensler**